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TO THE READER

Christian Reader,

I Am not Ignorant that we are fallen into a critical time, in which it is hard for a man to look or speak, without some odd reflection made upon him: I was therefore far from being ambitious of appearing on the Stage in this juncture, either in speaking on such an Occasion as produced the following Sermon; or in committing it to the World in Print; knowing how much I should be Exposed thereby. Though on the other side, I am not of that sullen Humour, to shun a Service, wherein I may expect to meet an Affront, when called by God to it, and an advantage is Offered me of doing good. I am none of these Flatterers that will paint a Vice with the Vizar of a Vertue upon it. Nor yet of those Male Con-

tents whom nothing can please, but they seek to pick an hole in every thing that is done. I can bless God heartily for men in Authority, who seek the weal of our Israel, making it their Study and Endeavour to Advance the Interest of Religion and Righteousness among their People: and can remember that they are men, and may mistake; and endeavour to cover rather than discover their Infirmities. I do therefore crave your candid Interpretation of the following Discourse. I counted my self bound in Conscience if I spake any thing, to Level it to the Occasion; and to that end, reckoned nothing more proper, than to represent, as in a Glass, the fair face of a Well-ordered Government, with some of the advantages accruing therefrom, together with the inconveniences naturally consequent on the contrary; that all Ranks of Men in a Civil Capacity may be helped thereby in what they ought to pursue, and what to avoid. It is a Rule in Mathematicks, Rectum est index sui et obliqui. Here may we see our Duty and our Danger; the Psalmist saith, Psal. 119. 105. Thy Word is a Lamp to my Feet, and a Light to my Path. If any, whether he be in Place of Rule, or under Subjection, will try himself by this, and amend himself by the direction of it, I have all I aim at: if he shall improve it to Reflect upon others, the blame will be his own. I am sensible how unfit I was to Undertake

in a thing ſo much too big for me: all that I can ſay, is, that I ſtudied to bring all as near as I could to the Unerring Scripture; and to husband a ſhort time as profitably as I might. If what is thus emitted may be for Gods Glory, and the Benefit of his People in this Province, let him have the whole Praiſe: To his Bleſſing I Commend it,

Who am
the leaſt and moſt unworthy
of Goſpel Miniſters.

Samuel Willard.

The

THE CHARACTER OF A GOOD RULER.

II. SAMUEL XXIII. III.

He that Ruleth over men, must be just, Ruling in the Fear of God.

WHether the Ordination of *Civil Government* be an *Article of the Law of Nature*, and it should accordingly have been established upon the Multiplication of Mankind, although they had retained their Primitive Integrity: Or whether it have only a *Positive right*, and was introduced upon mans *Apostasy*; is a question about which all are not agreed. The equity of it, to be sure, is founded in the Law natural, and is to be

be discovered by the light of Nature, being accordingly acknowledged by such as are strangers to Scripture Revelation; and by Christians it is reducible to the first Command in the Second Table of the Decalogue; which is supposed to be a transcript of the Law given to *Adam* at the first, and written upon the Tables of his Heart. For tho', had man kept his first state, the Moral Image Concreated in him, consisting in, *Knowledg, Righteousness, and True Holiness*, would have maintained him in a perfect understanding of, and Spontaneous Obedience to the whole duty incumbent on him, without the need of civil Laws to direct him, or a civil Sword to lay compulsion on him; and it would have been the true Golden Age, which the Heathen *Mythologists* are so Fabulous about, yet even then did the All-Wise God Ordain Orders of Superiority and Inferiority among men, and required an *Honour* to be paid accordingly. But since the unhappy Fall hath Robbed man of that perfection, and filled his heart with perverse and rebellious principles, tending to the Subversion of all Order and the reducing of the World to a *Chaos*; necessity requires, and the Political happiness of a People is concerned in the establishment of Civil Government. The want of it hath ever

ever been pernicious, and attended on with miserable Circumstances. When there was no Governour in *Israel*, but every man did what he would, what horrible outrages, were then perpetrated, though Holy and Zealous *Phinehas* was at that time the High-Priest? and we ourselves have had a Specimen of this in the short *Anarchy* accompanying our late *Revolution*. Gods Wisdom therefore, and his goodness is to be adored in that he hath laid in such a relief for the Children of men, against the mischief which would otherwise devour them; and engraven an inclination on their hearts, generally to comply with it. But this notwithstanding, mens sins may put a curse into their Blessings, & render their remedy to be not better, possibly worse than the Malady. Government is to prevent and cure the disorders that are apt to break forth among the Societies of men; and to promote the civil peace and prosperity of such a people, as well as to suppress impiety, and nourish Religion. For this end there are to be both *Rulers*, and such as are to be *Ruled* by them: and the Weal or Woe of a People mainly depends on the qualifications of those *Rulers*, by whom we are to be Governed. Hence that Observation, Eccles. 10. 16, 17. *Woe to thee, O Land? when thy King is a Child,*

and thy Princes eat in the morning. Bleſſed art thou, O Land! when thy King is the Son of Nobles, and thy Princes eat in due ſeaſon for ſtrength, and not for Drunkenneſs. There is then much of Gods Kindneſs or Diſpleaſure to be Read in his Providential diſpoſing of this Affair. God ſaith of them, *Hoſ.* 13. 11. *I gave them a King in mine Anger.*

We have therefore the Character of a Good RULER Recommended to us in the Word of GOD, and Exemplified in ſome who deſerved that Epithete, not only to let men know when GOD favours them with ſuch a Bleſſing, that they may return Him His deſerved Praiſe for it; but alſo, both to Inſtruct ſuch into whoſe hands it falls, how to Demean themſelves in their Authority, ſo as to be a Common Good; and to direct thoſe unto whoſe truſt it is Committed, what manner of Perſons they ought to introduce, if they would either Pleaſe GOD, or Conſult their own and their Peoples Welfare.

Such a *Character* we find is given in our Text; and we may ſuppoſe *David* intended for an Inſtance of it.

The

The words are Introduced with greateſt ſolemnity, to give them the deeper impreſſion on the hearts of thoſe that read them, and are concerned in them. They are the words of *David*, whom God had exalted to the Government over His People *Iſrael*, and inſtructed in his Duty: who was Gods own *Anointed* by an Extraordinary calling And they are his *Laſt words*, Probably not that he ever ſpake, but ſome of his dying words, and the laſt that he uttered by a Peculiar Prophetical Inſpiration, & they were not his own words, but ſuch as the *Spirit of God* dictated to him, and ſpake by him, whereof he was only the Inſtrument of their being committed to record. They therfore came out of the Mouth of *the God and Rock of Iſrael*: and ſurely there muſt be unſpeakable Importance in words Uſhered in with ſo Majeſtical a Preface. I might here tell you the divers readings, occaſioned by the curt expreſſion of the *Hebrew* Text, but I ſhall not ſpend time in it, ſince the general current of Interpreters runs the ſame way with our Tranſlation. And I need but briefly acquaint you that the import or ſenſe of the words is variouſly underſtood: ſome apply them to God himſelf, and accordingly read the words as a continued deſcription of him: *he that Ruleth juſt men*;

that ruleth men to fear God. Others apply them to *Chriſt*, as typified by *David*; and take them to be a Propheſy of his *Mediatorial Kingdom*: and then they read it, *ſhall be juſt, ruling the fear of God*: *i. e. Divine Inſtituted worſhip*: pointing to the abrogating of the legal, and bringing in of the Goſpel adminiſtrations: but then the *Type* alſo muſt be reſpected, at leaſt under a ſhadow: and ſo they ſuppoſe that *Davids Typical Government* is repreſented. Others take them according to the ſenſe of our Tranſlation, not to be a prediction but a precept, giving us to underſtand what manner of perſons ſuch are required to be, by the Divine Mandate, and that it was left as a Rule to them who ſhould ſucceed.

In the words there are two things to be obſerved.

1 The Subject ſpoken of; *He that Ruleth over men. He that ruleth*] The word Imports one that hath any Dominion, right, or authority over either Perſons or things; and is here applicable to all thoſe degrees of men that have any mark of Authority upon them; whether the *King* as Supream, or any *Miniſters* under him, under what Character or title ſoever:

Over men] the word [*Adam*] is frequently uſed to expreſs the *Commonalty*, or People

People that are to be Governed: but however, there is or ought to be a vast difference between the Government of Men and Beasts; though some Brutish men may deserve to be treated as Brutes. Man is a Reasonable Creature, and of the same order of being with them that Govern him, and ought to be managed accordingly.

2. The Duty incumbent on such an one: *He must be Just, Ruling in the Fear of God.* Some suppose that the double Office of the *Civil Magistrate* is here pointed at, who is *Custos utriusque Tabulæ*, who is to maintain Justice towards men, & Piety towards God. Others suppose the latter Expression to be *Exegetical* to the former.

[*Just*] *i. e* One that makes Conscience to observe and keep to the Rule of Righteousness in all his Administrations, he ought not to Exert his Power Illimitedly, and Arbitrarily, but in Conformity to the Law of God, and the Light of Nature, for Gods Honour, and the promoting of the common benefit of those over whom he bears Authority. And hence,

[*Ruling in the Fear of God.*] And if he doth not so, he cannot be Just: and by the *Fear of God* we may either understand an holy *Reverential Fear*, entertained in his heart, which must Govern him, or else he will

will never Rule well. For though every good man will not make a good Ruler, yet it is ſcarce to be believed that a man will Acquit this Office well without Piety. Or elſe it may be taken *Metonimically*, for the Rules of Gods Word, and thoſe particular Precepts which direct men how to carry themſelves in every Station: which are therefore called the *Fear of God*, becauſe they ſerve rightly to Regulate our Fear of him Where it is ſaid [*he muſt*] it doth not ſuppoſe that all who have ſuch Authority with them, do ſo Rule: woful experience too frequently proves the contrary: but that it is their Duty, and a matter of great Importance for them to attend it. Hence.

DOCTRINE

It is of higheſt Conſequence, that Civil Rulers ſhould be Juſt Men, and ſuch as Rule in the Fear of God.

Where ſhall we find any one Text in Scripture Uſhered in more remarkably than this? I may not tarry here to draw out this Character in its full dimenſions, and give it all its Colours; but muſt only make ſome brief Glances.

Civil

Civil Rulers are all such as are in the exercise of a rightful Authority over others. These do not all of them stand in one equal Rank, nor are alike influential into Government. There are Supream and Subordinate Powers: and of these also there are some who have a *Legislative*, others an *Executive* Power in their Hands; which two, though they may sometimes meet in the same persons, yet are in themselves things of a different Nature. There are *Superiour Magistrates* in *Provinces*, and such as are of *Council* with them, and *Assembly men*, the *Representatives* of the People. There are *Judges* in Courts, *Superiour* and *Inferiour*; *Justices* of the *Peace* in their several Precincts: and in each of these Orders there Resides a measure of Authority.

Now, that all these may be *Just*, it is firstly required, that they have a Principle of *Moral Honesty* in them, and Swaying of them: that they *Love Righteousness*, *and Hate Iniquity*: that they be *Men of Truth*, Exod. 18. 21. for every man will act in his Relation, according to the Principle that Rules in him: so that an Unrighteous man will be an Unrighteous Ruler, so far as he hath an Opportunity.

They must also be acquainted with the Rules of Righteousness; they must know what

what is Juſt, and what is Unjuſt, be *Able men*, Exod. 18. 21. For, though men may know and not do, yet *without Knowledge the Mind cannot be good.* Ignorance is a Foundation for Error, and will likely produce it, when the man applies himſelf to act: and if he do right at any time, it is but by gueſs, which is a very poor Commendation.

Again, he muſt be one that reſpects the Cauſe, and not the perſons in all his Adminiſtrations, Deut. 1. 17. *Ye ſhall not reſpect Perſons in Judgment*, &c. if his Affections Overſway his Judgment at any time, they will be a crooked Liaſs, that will turn him out of the way, and that ſhall be Juſtice in one mans caſe, which will not be ſo in another.

Farthermore, he muſt be one whom neither Flattery nor Bribery may be able to remove out of his way, Deut. 16. 19. *Thou ſhalt not wreſt Judgment, thou ſhalt not Reſpect Perſons, neither take a Gift*; and hence he muſt be one who hates both Ambition and Covetouſneſs, Exod. 18. 21 *Hating Covetouſneſs*; which word ſignifies, a *Greedy Deſire*, and is applicable to both the fore cited Vices: for if theſe Rule him, he will never be a juſt Ruler.

Finally,

Finally, he must be one who prefers the publick Benefit above all private and ſeparate Intereſts whatſoever. Every man in his place, owes himſelf to the good of the whole; and if he doth not ſo devote himſelf, he is unjuſt: and he who either to advance himſelf, or to be Revenged on another, will puſh on Injurious *Laws*, or pervert the true Intention of ſuch as are in Force, is an unjuſt man: and he who is under the influence of a *Narrow Spirit*, will be ready to do ſo, as occaſion offers.

Nor is this *Juſtice* to be lookt upon as ſeparate from the *Fear of God*, but as influenced and maintained by it. He therefore that *Ruleth in the Fear of God*, is one who Acknowledgeth God to be his Soveraign, and carries in his heart an Awful Fear of him: who owns his Commiſſion to be from him, and expects ere long to be called to give in an Account of his managing of it: which maketh him to ſtudy in all things to pleaſe him, and to be afraid of doing any thing that will provoke him.

And accordingly, he is a Student in the *Law* of God, and *Meditates in it Day and Night*; making it the Rule into which he ultimately reſolves all that he

doth in his place. We find that in the Old Law, the *King* was to *write a* Copy of it with his own hand, and to make uſe of it at all times: *Deut.* 17. 18, 19.

If he hath any thing to do in the making of Laws, he will conſult a good Conſcience, and what may be pleaſing to God, and will be far from *framing miſchief by a Law.* And if he be to execute any Laws of men, he will not dare to give a judgment for ſuch an one as directly Croſſeth the Command of God, but counts it *ipſo facto* void, and his Conſcience acquitted of his Oath.

Yea the *Fear of God* will make him not to think himſelf Lawleſs; nor dare to bear witneſs, by Laws and Penalties, againſt ſins in others, which he countenanceth and encourageth by living in the Practiſe of himſelf: But to uſe utmoſt endeavours that his own life may be an exemplification of Obedience, and others may learn by Him, what a Veneration he hath for the Laws that are enacted for the good of Man-kind.

In a word, he is one that will take care to promote *Piety* as well as *Honeſty* among men; and do his utmoſt that the true Religion may be countenanced and eſtabliſhed, and

and that all Ungodlineſs, as well as Unrighteouſneſs, may have a due Teſtimony born againſt it at all times. So he reſolves *Pſal.* 75. 10. *all the horns of the wicked alſo will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous ſhall be exalted.*

It then follows that we enquire of what great moment or conſequence it is that theſe ſhould be ſuch: and there is a threefold reſpect in which the high importance of it is to be diſcovered by us.

I. In reſpect to the Glory of God.

Civil Rulers are Gods Vicegerents here upon earth; hence they are ſometimes honoured with the title of Gods, *Pſal.* 82 6. *I have ſaid ye are Gods.* Government is Gods Ordinance; and thoſe that are Veſted with it, however *mediately* introduced into it, have their rightful authority from him, Prov. 8. 15, 16. *By me Kings Reign, and Princes Decree Juſtice. By me Princes Rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth,* and they that are from him, ſhould be for him, and ought to ſeek the Honour of him who is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*: which they only then do, when they manage their whole Intereſt and

Power with a Deſign for his Glory; & accordingly manage themſelves in all their Miniſtrations by the Statutes of his Kingdom; which none will ever do, but they that are *Juſt, Ruling in the Fear of God.* Righteouſneſs and Religion flouriſhing in theſe, will be as a Torch on an Hill, whoſe Light and Influence will be vaſtly extenſive: every one will be advantaged to ſee their good works, and to Glorifie God for and in them. Their very Example will have the force of a Law in it, and win many by a powerful Attraction, to the avoiding of ſin, and practiſing of Righteouſneſs. They will be a good Copy, that many will be ambitious to write after: and their faithful Adminiſtrations will render them a *Terror to Evil Doers, and an Encouragement to them that do well*; which will advance the very end of Government. Whereas the Evil Deportment, and Ill Management of *Rulers*, who are unjuſt, and void of the Fear of God, is an open ſcandal, and of a more pernicious tendency than the wickedneſs of others; inaſmuch as their Example is a diſcouragement to them that are well diſpoſed, and animates thoſe that are ſet in their hearts for iniquity, and they are thereby emboldned to ſhew their heads, and to declare their ſin as *Sodom*; hence

that

hat Remark of the Psalmist, *Psal.* 12. 8. *The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.* Those that would bear their Testimony against Impiety and Debauchery, are frowned on and neglected; and such as would Nourish them are Countenanced: and either good Laws to suppress them are not provided, or they are laid by as things Obsolete, and of no Service: and thus all Abominations come in upon a People as a Flood, and the Name of God is wofully dishonoured by this means: and hereupon the last and most excellent end of Government comes to be frustrated, and what is there that we can conceive to be of greater weight than this? if this be lost, the Glory of such a people is gone.

2 In regard to the weal of the People over whom they Rule.

A People are not made for Rulers, But Rulers for a People. It is indeed an Honour which God puts upon some above others, when he takes them from among the People, and sets them up to Rule over them, but it is for the Peoples sake, and the Civil felicity of them is the next end of Civil Policy; and the happiness of Rulers

lers is bound up with theirs in it. Nor can any wiſe men in authority think themſelves happy in the Miſery of their Subjects, to whom they either are or ſhould be as Children are to to their Fathers: We have the Benefit of Government expreſſed, 1. *Tim.* 2: 2. *a quiet Life and a peacable, in all Godlineſs and honeſty.* and it lies eſpecialy with Rulers, under God, to make a People Happy or Miſerable. When men can injoy their Liberties and Rights without moleſtation or oppreſſion; when they can live without fear of being born down by their more Potent Neighbours; when they are ſecured againſt Violence, and may be Righted againſt them that offer them any injury, without fraud; and are encouraged to ſerve God in their own way, with freedom, and without being impoſed upon contrary to the Goſpel precepts; now are they an happy People. But this is to be expected from none other but men juſt and Pious: they that are otherwiſe, will themſelves be oppreſſours, and they that are influenced by them, and dependent on them, will adde to the grievance. They that ſhould look after them Will Do it faſt enough: Yea every one will uſurp a Licenſe to do ſo to his Neighbour upon an advantage: and ſuch a people muſt needs groan under an intollera-

ble burden. Beſides, it is a great Truth, that the Mercies and Judgments of God come upon a people, according as their Rulers carry themſelves in managing of the Truſt which God hath committed to them. Juſt and Zealous Rulers, are men that *Stand in the Gap*, and keep off Judgments from a ſinning people; God *ſought* for *one* ſuch, *Ezek.* 22. 30. they *turn away wrath*, when it hath made an inroad, ſo it is recorded of Phinehas that he did, *Pſ* 106. 30. and God is wont to bleſs ſuch a People, as He did *Iſrael* and *Judah* in the days of *David*, *Solomon*, *Jehoſhaphat*, *Hezekiah*, and *Joſiah*: wheras when theſe fall into ſuch ſins as God is Provoked at, the People are like to Smart for it. There is ſuch an Influence with the Prevarications of theſe men, that, in the righteous judgment of God, thoſe under them ſuffer grievouſly by it. This the Heathen obſerved in the courſe of Providence, and made that remark upon it, *Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.* Thus *David* numbers the People, and Seventy Thouſand of the men of Iſrael die for it, 2Sa. 24. Yea ſuch may be the influence of the Male-adminiſtration of Rulers, though done without malice, and in an heat of miſguided *zeal* for the People of GOD; as *Sauls* act in Slaying the *Gibeonites* is recorded to have

have been, 2 *Sam* 21 2. that the Guilt may ly long upon a Land, and break out in Terrible Judgments a great while after, and not be expiated till the ſin be openly confeſſed, and the Atonement ſought unto.

3 With Reference to *Rulers* themſelves. It is, as we before Obſerved, a Dignity put upon them, to be preferred to Government over their Brethren; to have the overſight, not of Beaſts, but of Men. But as there is a great Truſt devolved on them, ſo there is an anſwerable Reckoning which they muſt be called unto: And however they are ſetled in Authority by men, yet *GOD*, who Rules over all, hath put them in only *Durante Bene Placito*: they are upon their good Behaviour; they are *Stewards*, and whenſoever *GOD* pleaſeth, He will call for a Reckoning, and put them out. *GOD ſets up, and he pulls down*; and he hath a reſpect to mens Carriages in his dealings with them. Godly and Zealous *Phinehas* got a Bleſſing for himſelf and his Poſterity, *Numb.* 25. 11. *&c.* Whereas *Saul* procured for himſelf a Rejection, and the laying aſide and almoſt Extirpation of his Family. We have this alſo inſtanced in *Shebna* and *Eliakim* *Iſa.* 22. 15. *&c.* Yea, what did *Jeroboam*, what did *Ahab*, and many others procure for

for themſelves, by their ill Government, but the utter rooting out of their Names, and Poſterity? The *Fourth Generation* may Rue that ever they derived from ſuch Progenitors. The only ſure way for Rulers to build up their own Houſes, is to be ſuch in their places as *David* was, of whom we have that Teſtimony, *Pſal.* 78. 71, 72. *He brought him to Feed* Jacob *his People, and* Iſrael *his Inheritance. So he Fed them according to the Integrity of his heart, aad guided them by the Skilfulneſs of his hands.* And although GOD doth not always peculiarly put a Brand in this World upon Impious and Unjuſt Rulers, yet there is a Tribunal before which they muſt ſtand e're long as other men; only their Account will be ſo much the more Fearful, and Condemnation more Tremendous, by how much they have neglected to take their greater advantages to Glorify GOD, and abuſed their Power to His Diſhonour, by which they had a fairer opportunity than other men.

USE.

All that I have to Offer by way of Improvement, shall be in a Threefold Commendation of this TRUTH to us.

1. Let me propose it to such in whose hands it is to Appoint the Persons that are to bear Rule over this People; whether for the making of Laws to Govern by, or the putting of such as are made into Execution: Whether *Counsellors, Assembly-Men,* or *Justices of the Peace.* Let this be your directory in exerting of this right. Civil Government is seated in no particular Persons or Families by a Natural right, neither hath the Light of Nature, nor the Word of GOD determined in particular, what Form of Government shall be Established among men, whether *Monarchical, Aristocratical,* or *Democratical*: much less, who are individually to be acknowledged in Authority, and accordingly submitted to. Nevertheless the *Holy Providence of GOD* presides

ſides in this matter; ſometimes, by a more *Immediate*, and *Extraordinary* pointing to the Perſons and Families: when by *Revelation* he declares his pleaſure in it. Thus was *Saul* ſet up over the Kingdom of *Iſrael*; and afterwards *David* was thus choſen of God, and an Entail made of the Crown on his Poſterity: but this way hath long ſince ceaſed. Sometimes it is more *mediate* and *ordinary*, and that is, either *Forcible*, when God Judicially delivers a People up to the will of their enemies, and the Conquerour gives Laws to, and appoints Rulers over ſuch a People at his pleaſure, and they are compelled to accept of them, little to their content: which, as is not Elegible, ſo neither is it wont to be of duration: things violent uſe not to be Permanent. Or *voluntary*, which is by the free conſent of a People, orderly, and without Compulſion eſtabliſhing the *Fundamentals of Government* among themſelves, and the *methods* of introducing Perſons into authority: which *Methods* are not preſcribed in Scripture, but remain points of Prudence, and may Lawfully be divers here and there. There are yet general Rules which both reaſon and Religion do point men to attend in this Caſe; and the weal or wo of a People do

very much depend therupon. And as it is a thing very grateful to men to have some hand and consent in the appointment of their own Rulers, so they do either make or mar themselves by the using or abusing of such a liberty. When this power is *Immediately* devolved upon some persons, they have great advantage to procure either the happiness or misery of their People. Such Electors therefore are under the obligation to be very wary in the application of themselves to the *Nomination* of the persons for such a trust. A good *Charter* is Doubtless Preferible to a bad one; it is a great Priviledge to be secured from being hurt by any but our selves: but, let *Charter Privileges* be never so Excellent, Good Rulers only can make us Happy under them: and if they are not so, we suffer notwithstanding.

Here then you are told what qualities are to be eyed in those whom you fix your Choise upon. Whatsoever other Rules discretion may point to be observed in this affair, yet these must always be of the *Quorum*. It is true, there are none without their failings; nor can we expect that the best of men will never do amiss; but yet the

the Beſt are to be preferred, as they that will do it ſeldomeſt, and never of deſign. They that *Fear God* will be afraid wilfully to hurt men; they that are *juſt* will do juſtice, & that can wrong none. This is it which advantageth all other gifts, whether natural or acquired, to be truely ſerviceable to the promoting of the welfare of a People: without this, the more that men have of theſe, they are ſo much the more advantaged to do miſchief. There is no miſery greater, or leſs pitied, than what men fooliſhly bring on themſelves; and none will be equally blamed for it, as they who were the guilty occaſions of it, or more deſerve it. Chuſe ſuch men, and then you may expect to be ſo Governed: if you deſire that *Holineſs, and Righteouſneſs* may be promoted and encouraged, this is the beſt ſtroak that you can give to it: if you have a mind that *Prophaneneſs*, and *Debauchery* ſhould take place, and bear all down, here is the readieſt way for it.

And if you will keep to the Rule preſcribed in our *Text*, beware of being miſguided by *Special Favour*, *Bribery* or *Faction*

When Perſons ſhall be crowded in, becauſe

cauſe they are our Friends, or have gained a room in our affections, without any reſpect to their meetneſs, but what our blind paſſions judge of; or that they may have a way to ſupport themſelves by the Government; it is eaſy to tell what is to be expected.

When places of Truſt in Governments are bought and ſold, and he ſhall have them that will give moſt for them, we may well conclude that ſuch a People are bought and ſold too, and muſt only ſerve to make a good Market of.

When a People are divided into Factions; Juſt, and Wiſe, and good Men are renounced, & not thought worthy to be made uſe of, becauſe they favour not the Party that can ſway; and ſuch as are hotly zealous for the deſign, are counted, meerly by that *zeal* ſufficiently qualified, and to be of all moſt worthy; this will not promote the Publick Good, but only gain to the one ſide a little more of advantage to do hurt.

2 Let me humbly offer this as a Copy for all that either are, or may be in place of Rule, to Write after, Allow me the liberty

berty to ſay this from GOD; that by what-ſoever Titles of, *Excellent*, *Honourable*, or *Worſhipful*, you are known; you not only Rule under ſuch as are your Superiors on Earth, unto whom you are accountable for what you do; but under GOD alſo, who is your Great SOVERAIGN. Your Authority is from Him, and ought therefore to be for Him, elſe will you be found falſe to your Truſt. You Rule over His Subjects, and that not only upon a common account, as the whole World is His Kingdom, but one more *Special*, as the People under your Watch, are the Subjects of His *GOSPEL KINGDOM*: if you do that which is Right to them, He will be Pleaſed. but if you ſhould do otherwiſe, their *APPEAL* is open to Him, and there is a COURT that will be called, wherein their CAUSE ſhall be Heard, and Adjuſted.

Be you entreated, to meaſure all your Adminiſtration by this Rul: *Do all juſtly and in the fear of God.* This is the way to be Bleſſings in your places, and to be the *Bleſſed of the Lord.* By this courſe you will make your people an happy people, and you your ſelves ſhall be Eſtabliſhed. Thus ſhall you pull down a bleſſing on your own heads

heads, and upon the Land you dwell in. This is the way to be *the Repairers of breaches, and the Restorers of paths to dwell in.*

To this end, be entreated to take care that *Religion* may Flourish; the True *Fear of* GOD, and Right *Administration* of His *Ordinances* may be *Promoted* and *Secured*: that *Righteousness* may be done for men, and that *Iniquity* which defiles a Land, and pulls down Wrath, may be Purged away: that *Drunkenness, and Swearing, Fornication, and Sabbath-Prophanation,* and whatsoever hastens the Calamity of a Professing People, may be duely born Witness against. Let this be your Sincere Unbiassed Aim in all that you do.

Carry this with you, & let it Rule in the making of Laws: let the Word of GOD be consulted, and the Common Utility of the Subject be designed: For, though there be not a Body of Civil Laws drawn up in the *Scriptures,* to which every Polity is to be confined, yet there are sufficient *general directions, & Rules,* to be gathered from thence; which may Regulate in this Affair.

That

Take heed of any Sinister Aims in whatsoever Laws do pass: Laws made to strengthen a particular separate Interest, never did Good, but Hurt to a Body-Politick: that which may serve the present turn, may in a little time prove more Mischievous, than ever it was Advantageous. Remember, you cannot Repeal such Laws, when you will, or when you have advanced a design with them. Look then forward to the after Issues. It will be no small Aggravation of our Trouble, to be Wounded with a Shaft of our own making. Look for Changes in a World of Mutability, and lay in, as far as innocent Prudence may direct, for your Own, and your Peoples Safety.

Keep to this also in all your Administration or Application of Laws. Maintain a good Conscience in it, and let the *Fear of God*, and a Principle of *Justice* make you lay aside all Sinister Respects. Let not Persons but Things Sway you in all your Dispensations; and when the case is the same, let the same sentence proceed from you: let neither Riches nor Poverty turn the Scale; neither Friendship nor Enmity spoil the Sentence. Take no Gift in secret

to ſtop or Pervert Juſtice; nor miſapply your power to take private or perſonal Revenge. When Caſes are plain, do not obſcure them; and when they are dubious *Search them out*: and let not flattery or Impudence prevail over you, but take his advice in 2. *Chron* 16. 9. *Thus ſhall you do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect heart, Deal couragiouſly, and the Lord ſhall be with the good.*

Remember the cauſe is Gods, and he will have the calling of it over again; where he will either applaud your fidelity, or condemn your unfaithfulneſs.

Do ſo alſo in your Exemplary converſation. Do not do that your ſelves, which you ought in Duty, and oath, to puniſh in others; Embolden not wicked men to tranſgreſs by your example, and to excuſe themſelves upon your account. That Man who Will Violate the Laws which He is to Rule by, will ſoon neglect to Exec... them on others, and bring reproach o... himſelf where he doth.

3 Let it afford matter of Inſtruction ... us all.

... Are

Are these the Eminent Qualifications of good Rulers? it is no small concern that we have in this affair. It tells us that we ought Earnestly to *Pray* to God that we may have such always: and we pray for our selves when we so do.

Whatsoever other influence we may have into the appointment of those that are to Govern us, there is none that can hinder us of this but our selves. God Overrules the *Lot*, he Determines the Hearts of men, and he can make *men after his own Heart*: he Presides over every Election; and if we can prevail with him by importunate Prayer, our business is done. It is one of the Blessings that he will be *sought unto for, by the House of Israel.*

It calls us to be thankful to him for such when he bestows them upon us. God not a little displays his kindness to a people, when it is thus; and expects their gratitude to him for so Comprehensive a Mercy: there is nothing will sooner lose us this benefit than Ingratitude.

Let us Encourage them that are such, and that by Cheerful acknowledgment

of them, Contentation under them, and candid Interpretation of them.

We are Governed by men of like infirmities with ourselves, wonder not if sometimes they discover something of them: but when we know that their cordial endeavours are to do that which is right, and promote our peacable and Godly Living, let this please us.

And beware of Murmurings; GOD will not take it well of us, and can easily let us know a difference: and it is an Observation that seldom misseth; *That they who are most addicted to, are soonest weary of Changes.*

In a Word, let us beware lest we provoke an Holy and Jealous God to anger so as to give us *men of another Spirit* to Rule over us, or to withdraw His Spirit from them that do, and leave them to do things inconvenient.

Evil Rulers, and the Male-Administrations of good ones, are punishments which GOD doth inflict on a people that have provoked him to Anger against them, *GOD gave* Saul *to Israel in his Wrath*; and he left David

to Number the people because *His Anger was kindled against* Israel.

If we Apostatise from GOD, and grow weary of his ways, he knows how to Scourge us after this manner; and hath, not seldom, done so by his people on such occasions.

But if we be a people Fearing GOD and Keeping of His Commandments, He will Delight in us to Bless us, and to do us Good: and to give us Rulers after his own Prescription, *Just Men, and Ruling in the Fear of God.*

FINIS.